

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 279.

SATURDAY, MAY 1, 1869.

PRICE 1½d.

A COUNTY FAMILY.

By THE AUTHOR OF 'A PERFECT TREASURE.'

CHAPTER I.—SLOGAN.

On the northern coast of North Wales stands Slogan, with its foot in the sea. It is a great mountain; great in size, though that is its least remarkable attribute; great in wealth, for it is a treasure-house of useful stone; and great in dim historic memories. On its summit was once the camp of a British host, year after year; but the Roman eagles never flew so high. Around it still survive, like circlets about a monarch's crown, three mighty rings of *débris*, that were, a thousand years ago, three ramparts of stone. Within them are still visible the casemates in which the defenders lived, and watched as from an eyry, land and sea. Many a vale, now fertile, can be seen from it, stretched out like an open map, and the rugged outlines of a hundred hills. On the calmest day in June, there is wind enough on Slogan's top to belly out the folds of a royal standard, which mayhap (in some shape or another) in days of old it did.

But few folks care to climb to the summit now, or to concern themselves therewith. As with the maiden in the ballad, it is the face of Slogan which is his fortune. Not, however, as in her case, by reason of its beauty. It is scarred and seamed, as surely no other mountain ever was, by the hand of man. Not Xerxes, with all his power, could, in his insolent domination over nature, have so transformed a hill, as the patient hewers of stone have altered Slogan.

Naturally grim and stern enough, he has now, thanks to pick and gunpowder, become one scar. Like an ancient warrior, whose ferocity has been enhanced by the small-pox, he scowls upon the smiling summer sea. Fifty times a day he emits, volcano-wise, a little puff of smoke, and then the stones come rattling down, and there is yet another blemish in his majestic features. Some of him, in point of fact, is *gone*. A day will come (forty

generations hence, however) when Slogan will indeed be literally, as well as metaphorically, a thing of the past. The last wagon-load of him will then have gone to pave the streets of what may be Liverpool and Manchester in one.

But at present he is high and huge enough, and though girdled about by tramways, and divided into stages by inclines (which should be rather called 'perpendiculars'), these are scarcely to be seen from the foot of him at all. You must toil up some winding path, worn in the slag and refuse, to discover them. Then you will also find that Slogan is a very ant-hill of human beings. About his forehead, men are clustering like ants indeed; appearing and disappearing, some with burdens, and some without, but all in motion. The mountain resounds with the stroke of their picks; with the echoes of the bugles, which give warning that a blast is about to take place; and with the roar of the blasts themselves. From terrace to terrace the stone is carried in huge trucks, that descend with immense velocity, and are connected by an endless chain, which by their weight at the same time hauls up 'the empties.' By the side of these inclines are ladders of stone, by which the quarrymen go up and down. These workers, whose calling lies in so weird a spot, two thousand feet and more above the fields in which their forefathers laboured (for this trade is comparatively new), are, in their appearance, different from other men. They are giants—often in height, but always in thews and sinews. The breeze of the mountain or of the sea blows perpetually upon them, and they thrive in it amazingly. The hammers which they use with ease, a field-labourer could scarcely lift. They are as good-natured as were the Goths, but, like them, are subject to fits of passion, and then—

They are affable, but it is no use addressing them in the English tongue, because they do not speak it. They understand, however, the one word 'beer,' especially when accompanied by the exhibition of a silver coin. For the rest, the magistrates assure you that they are an extremely well-conducted race of people, and the Established clergy have nothing to say against them, or to do with them at all.

Upon this August morning there are six hundred of these Titans upon Slogan, armed with spade and pick; but it is now noon—the truce-time between them and Nature, when they lay aside their weapons, to dine. Upon the most elevated terrace, and approached from the rest only by these steep inclines, there are a hundred men or so, consuming their mid-day meal—generally a hunch of bread and meat that would last you and me for a week. Some of them sitting in the open, under the shadow of the cliff; some in the little bomb-proof huts, which are built very literally as 'shelters from the blast;' and a few even swinging against the face of the rock from the ropes that support them there during their labours. Dangling between sea and sky, in a manner that makes one dizzy to behold, they lazily cut and munch, and watch the white-sailed ships come out and in, that carry away the result of their labours from the little jetty; but otherwise they are not greatly interested in the spectacle that nature spreads before them, and which causes such exhibitions of enthusiasm in those summer visitors from the neighbouring village who have the hardihood to reach the spot. There is one such visitor even now; a tall young fellow of what is called 'distinguished' appearance, and certainly of an appearance very distinguished from the rest of the occupants of the plateau. His face is pale, and rendered still more so by the black moustache he wears, curved like a bow, and twisted at the ends; his small hands are as white as a woman's, and though his limbs are well and strongly shaped enough, he seems, by comparison with those sons of Anak about him, almost like a woman in man's clothes; he appears effeminate even by contrast with the young overlooker by whose side he stands, and who is explaining to him the details of the scene before him. And yet John Denton is no Hercules. He is only a fine strong-built young fellow, with an eye like a hawk, and a broad brow, over which the short brown curls cluster so thickly that it seems low: his fingers, it is true, are long enough to have pertained to one of much greater height, and are extraordinarily supple; his speech is precise and distinct, whether he gives directions to the quarrymen in their own tongue, or addresses his companion in English. It was in this, rather than in build, that the most marked difference between himself and Herbert Stanhope lay. The latter spoke with effort—used that languid mode affected more or less by all young men of his class, and which, to some ears (notwithstanding that the speaker may mean to be civil and well behaved enough), sounds always galling and contemptuous. And thus it was in the present case, where certainly no assumption of superiority was intended.

Herbert Stanhope was no drawing swell from the Row or St James's Street, but he had passed much of his life among those silly fops, and had contracted their manner. If he had been born a poor man, and Denton a rich one, their present positions

might quite possibly have been reversed: as it was, the former was running through his fortune as quickly as racehorses (and other luxuries pertaining to 'fast' life) could help him to do it; while John Denton was making his way up the social ladder with as sure a foot as he scaled the inclines of Slogan. A parish orphan, he had risen at the National School to be pupil-teacher; then exhibiting considerable talent for figures, he had been employed by the agent for the quarries, first at his office, and subsequently on the mountain, and was now biding his time—preparing himself, meanwhile, by incessant study in leisure hours—for quite another line in life, that of civil engineer, an appointment connected with which profession had been promised to him by his present employer. It was the old story of a self-made and self-making man, but with a difference. John Denton's nature was not of that grasping sort which uses all things only to one end. He was ambitious, but not so greedy of success as to deny himself all refreshments upon the road to it, so that when it is reached at last, the appetite for them, so unnaturally thwarted, has fled for ever. One may wait for the enjoyments of life as one may wait for one's dinner—too long; and perhaps John Denton might have done so, his mind being deeply set upon getting on in the world, had it not been for one circumstance: he was not working for himself alone. His eyes were so bright, and his face so smiling—although, as we have hinted, it would now and again flush angrily at his companion's tone—because there was a certain modest damsel, on the other side of Slogan, who had promised to be his bride, in good time; by which we mean early; for he was still in that station of life in which it is found possible to marry on even less than three hundred pounds a year.

'Who is yonder old man with the big white head, Mr Overlooker? He seems too ancient for this sort of hammer-work, although I noticed that you (very properly) were not disposed to be hard upon him—'

'I do not understand you, sir,' interrupted Denton, with irritation. 'Mr Blackburn is no idler, I can tell you; although his arms may not move so fast as a younger man's.'

'Mr Blackburn, eh? What! have we gentlemen quarrymen here, then? Well, upon my life, now you mention it, there is an air of past grandeur about that old fellow, as though he had seen better days.'

These remarks referred to one, who, while certainly by far the senior of those present, were also a look of superiority almost as great as that of Mr Stanhope himself, although it owed nothing (as in his case) to attire, which was that of a common labourer. This personage was sitting with his back to the rock, his arms folded, his lips compressed, and his eyes darting from underneath their shaggy brows no very agreeable glances upon Stanhope himself.

'Hush, sir!' muttered the overlooker sternly; 'do you not see that he observes you are speaking of him with pity; and that he does not wish to be pitted?'

'I will give him half-a-crown, and a better cigar than he ever smoked in dreams, to make my peace with him,' returned the young gentleman with a sort of good-natured scorn, as he drew from his pocket a sealskin case.

'If you offer him money,' interposed Denton hastily, 'he will break your head in with his pick, sir. Anthony Blackburn is as much a gentleman as you are, every whit, although he is a poorer man than even I.'

'What!' ejaculated the other, in a voice that, in his great surprise, had lost every trace of languor, 'do you mean to tell me that that is Anthony Blackburn of Derbyshire—the man who was disinherited fifty years ago for marrying his mother's waiting-maid? Why, I've heard my grandfather tell that story a dozen times. My own house is within half-a-dozen miles of Redcombe Manor: I know the place as well as you know this quarry.'

'If you know anything about such matters, sir, for Heaven's sake, do not speak of them so loud. The remembrance of all that has past and gone is bitter to him as gall, and needs no revival. He was shamefully used by his own flesh and blood, as I have heard—parents, and brothers, and all.'

'Yes, it was hard lines. His father, Russell Blackburn (who was as proud as Lucifer, and as cruel), turned him out—eldest born though he was—in the cold, for marrying the girl for whom they do say the old satyr had a penchant himself; then, when he died, the three brothers followed suit. I don't suppose any one of them ever gave our friend there a farthing.'

'Ay, but they were punished for it,' answered Denton gravely. 'They were cursed in root and branch.'

'What! by the old gentleman yonder?' returned Stanhope with a cynical smile. 'Well, I daresay they were. But hard words did not break their bones, my good friend—it was hard riding that did that; at least, the second brother, Ferdinand, broke his neck in a steeple-chase; and something of the same sort happened to his son. Then hard living killed the third brother, Charles—he drank like a fish, and would not permit a woman to come within the Manor gates; but he had his good points, people said. Then Richard was drowned in the Dove. In fact, if it was not for young Dick, this old gentleman stonebreaker might yet enjoy his own again, for, as I have heard, his name was put in the entail by his father last of all, by way of mockery, since it seemed out of the question that he should survive three younger brothers and their children. However, against nineteen (for Dick is scarcely of age), sixty-eight (and old Anthony must be that at least) has not much chance; and, moreover, Dick's going to be married.'

'For Heaven's sake, don't tell him *that*, sir!' exclaimed Denton earnestly. 'It is a hopeless fancy, as you say; but, nevertheless, he clings to the idea that he shall still one day be master of Redcombe Manor. It is his dream by night, his castle in the air by day. He is always saying how that young Squire Richard has a short throat, and will die of a fit, notwithstanding Miss Ellen tells him how wicked it is thus to—'

'And who is Miss Ellen?' As though to recompense himself for the unwonted interest he had evinced in his recent talk, Mr Herbert Stanhope put this question with raised eyeglass and an elaborate indifference.

'She is Anthony Blackburn's orphan grandchild,' said John Denton quietly, after a little pause.

'And the only one?' inquired the other lazily.

'Gad, I'd take fifty to one, in ponies, about her coming into the property after all.'

'Ellen is only the grand-daughter,' observed Denton coldly. 'Anthony had another son besides her father.'

'Had! Is he dead, then?'

But before this question could be answered, a young girl came swiftly round the more distant corner of the crag with a covered basket in her hand, and on towards the spot where the old man was still sitting, with his eyes moodily fixed upon the ground.

'What a charming little fairy!' observed Mr Stanhope critically; 'with what a grace she carries herself as well as her basket! But it must be hard work for her coming up these steep inclines of yours, Mr Overlooker, eh?'

'She does not come up that way,' answered Denton curtly; 'there is a path over the mountain down to this top level.'

'How queer it seems to see a petticoat among all these rough fellows,' continued the other musing. 'It must be rather a dangerous experiment for her, surely?'

'What! for a modest young girl to bring her grandfather his dinner?' returned John Denton bitterly. 'It may be different—I have heard it is—among gentlemen such as you; but if any man here were to offer her an insult, the rest of them would pitch him down the mountain, as though he were a barrow of rubbish; and serve him right, too!' added the speaker with vehemence.

'To be thrown from the Tarpeian Rock for snatching a kiss from yonder pretty damsel? Well, that seems a severe punishment, considering the great temptation,' answered the other coolly. 'I had no idea the Welsh code of morals was such a strict one. The Registrar-general's Report upon the subject—Ah!' cried the speaker, perceiving the young girl had seated herself by the old man's side, 'that is Anthony Blackburn's grand-daughter, is it? Then, now I see what you mean. There is something in good blood, after all the Radicals have said, which carries weight with it even here, it seems. You look upon this young girl as a sort of lady, eh! although she has been dispossessed of her property: well, it's very creditable to you, Mr Overlooker, and shews how the feudal spirit still survives in these outlandish latitudes.'

'You mistake, sir, altogether,' answered Denton in a voice that shook with passion. 'All blood is alike in my eyes, and all women have an equal claim to my protection, but Ellen Blackburn is my promised wife, and demands a respect from everybody which I shall take care is paid.'

'My good sir,' said Stanhope quietly, as he scanned the young girl with undisguised but not impertinent admiration, 'I do assure you I respect Miss Blackburn amazingly, and I congratulate you with all my heart.'

CHAPTER II.—OVER THE HILLS TOGETHER.

When Denton said that the quarrymen all treated Ellen Blackburn with consideration, he did not exaggerate the fact; and Stanhope also was right in concluding that the position her grandfather had once held in the world had something to do with it. They pitied the misfortunes of this old man, who had worked among them with such seeming patience for many years, and had done

nothing to offend them; while the tender grace of the young girl herself—so different from the robust attractions of their own charmers—won from them a certain courtesy, which shewed itself in their abstinence from remark upon her actions. If other young women had brought dinner to their relatives to the 'top level,' they would, doubtless, have hardly escaped comment and rough compliment; but of this sprite-like messenger no notice was taken. She had tripped along past group after group, and save from a kindly nod from a giant head or two, which she had acknowledged by a grateful smile, had excited no stir. It was a sight they saw every day—this pretty but pale-faced girl, with her covered basket, which contained bread and meat for her grandfather; and they looked upon it, through their tobacco-smoke, approvingly.

'You are late, my dear,' said the old man, lifting up his gray head as she drew near, and regarding her with eager eyes. 'Was there any reason for it—any particular reason?'

'There was the reason of the wind upon the hill, grandfather, which was dead against me,' answered the girl smiling. 'See, I have brought you your favourite dinner—beef with mustard, and a nice fresh lettuce.'

'There was nothing for me by the post, then?' inquired the old man, without taking the least notice of these dainties.

'No, grandfather.'

This reply was given with a dejected air, quite different from that with which she had hitherto spoken. The fact was the post had not yet come in to their out-of-the-way cottage, but she had answered that same question a hundred times, and always in the negative. Anthony Blackburn was for ever expecting a letter that was to tell him that the last barrier between him and his rights was removed—he cared not how, but surely, if there was justice in heaven, the thing, however long delayed, must so happen at last. Was it not clear that a judgment had gone forth against his usurping kindred? First, Ferdinand and his son; then Charles; then Richard swept away; and now there was only Richard's brat between him and his long-lost wealth. Would not death take this one, like the rest? After fifty years of waiting—years of toil and gloom indeed, but which had been illumined occasionally by these family casualties, these spectral fires, in quite a brilliant manner—the goal would be surely reached at last! True, it was a boy's life against his own; but had not Ferdinand's boy died before he had reached this lad's age; and were not his father, and Charles, and Richard, all junior to him (Anthony); and yet all were dead! However, the news was not to come to-day, it seemed; and the old man, after one weary sigh, began to eat his meal.

Anthony Blackburn was, independently of his white beard and shaggy eyebrows, of a striking appearance; straight as a poplar, notwithstanding his weight of years, and the long use of the huge hammer which lay near him; his eyes had lost none of their fire; and his large limbs were still very powerful, although their elasticity had departed. Perhaps, if he had not been so strong, his fellow-workmen would not have paid him such respect; at all events, it pleased them to see in this old fellow, who had been brought up to no such trade, a skillful quarryman, who used the heaviest tools by choice.

In Ellen's basket there was neither beer nor spirits, but she took from it a glass tumbler—a vessel unknown among the other tenants of the top level, who used horn and tin—and having filled it with water from a spring that trickled over the rock, placed it by her grandfather's side. Scarcely had she done so, when a splinter flying from some rock where the men were resuming work, fell upon it and shattered it to atoms.

'My only glass,' was the old man's bitter comment. 'Misfortune never forgets me in small things as well as!—'

'Sir, I thank you.'

Stanhope had marked the catastrophe, and stepping hastily forward, offered the silver bottom of his pocket-flask in place of the broken tumbler.

'If you will permit me to fill it with sherry instead of water,' said he politely—'I have more here than I require.'

'Nay, sir; I do not drink wine—at present,' responded the old man stiffly; 'and yet, since you are so courteous—yes, I will just taste it.' It was curious to see his look at the costly cup ere he put his lips to its contents. They had not touched silver (he was thinking) for half a century. How excellent was this liquor, the like of which (though it was but hotel sherry) had been so long a stranger to his palate. He had intended just to sip a little, but now he slowly drained the delicious draught to the lees. As he gave back the empty cup to Stanhope, his eye caught sight of something engraved upon it. 'Is that your name, sir?' inquired he with sudden interest.

'Yes; and my address—Herbert Stanhope, Curlew Hall, at your service.'

'Oh, indeed,' returned the old man with an affectation of unconcern, while his face, bronzed with sun and wind, turned suddenly quite pale.—'Good-morning, sir, and thank you: it's time for me to begin work again.'

With that he took up his accustomed weapon; but the visitor, who, at this hint, had retired to some distance, noticed that he did not make a stroke with it for several minutes, but stood leaning on the long handle, as if in thought. Stanhope looked round for the girl, but she had disappeared; and then for the overlooker, but he had also slipped away; so, shrugging his shoulders, he lighted a cigar, and betook himself down the unprotected incline, notwithstanding that a bugle had just blown to give warning to all to seek shelter.

A general opinion was thereupon expressed in the Welsh dialect among the occupants of the top level that their recent visitor was a cool hand, and it was not the first time that that observation had in other high circles been made with reason upon Mr Herbert Stanhope.

Not a quarter of a mile from this same populous spot, Slogan was as solitary as Sahara. You had only to turn the northern corner of the crag, and take the steep but winding footpath that led upwards, to find yourself out of all human sight and hearing. This would have been the case with Ellen Blackburn, already started on her homeward journey, but for the presence of John Denton, who had accompanied her so far, in order to carry her basket for her, and assist her up the cliff; a work which, considering that the basket was empty, and the young girl, although so delicate-looking, as agile as a chamois, may be set down as one of supererogation.

'There, John, that will do,' said she; 'I will not have you come any farther. As it is, you have wasted half your dinner-hour.'

'I need no dinner,' said John quietly. 'The sight of you is meat and drink to me.'

'But you are also neglecting your duty, Mr Overlooker,' urged she with a charming pretence of rigour.

'No, I'm not; I'm overlooking them all now,' said John with twinkling eyes; for a little joke went a great way with this excellent young fellow. 'I don't intend to let you cross the mountain alone to-day, Ellen. There are hawks abroad, and I mean to see my pretty one safe to her dovecot. You need not look up at the sky for a buzzard. You know as well as I do what I mean; the bud upon your cheek is blowing, blowing into a bonny, bonny rose-blush. There! Yes, Ellen, I saw him stare at you, the insolent hound. We want no scented gentlemen of that sort on honest Slogan. I wish the big hotel yonder had never been built to harbour such folks, though its stones did come out of our quarry.'

'It appears to me,' said the young girl gravely, 'that Mr John Denton is jealous.'

'No, darling; it is not that. Only it makes me sick to see these idle supercilious scoundrels wasting their own time, as well as that of everybody they come across, simply because they have nothing to do but mischief. It angers me to have to listen to their long-drawn stupid drawl, not to mention the opinions (if they can be called such) with which they are sure to favour one, and which are simply infamous. If I had my will, there should be no such drones among us at all.'

'What! you would blow the whole hive to pieces with your favourite gunpowder, eh, John, sooner than not destroy them? Poor drones! and would you sweep away all the butterflies also?' and she pointed laughingly to an exquisite creature of that species, a very embodiment of light, and joy, and colour, flitting from sunlit stone to stone across their path.

'No, dear, I would not,' responded the young man; 'because, although I am not aware that butterflies are useful, in their beauty and in their grace they remind me of you. I said I was not jealous, nor am I, because I think you just the truest-hearted girl that ever breathed mountain air. Else, where rank is concerned, or even a little social superiority in the way of money, you women are as weak as water: of course, you would never disgrace yourself like Phoebe Morgan or Alice Jones—but, I sometimes think that even in your case, if you were suddenly to become rich, Ellen, and I was just as I am now, or, perhaps, a trifle more prosperous' (this was added with a certain pride), 'you might ask yourself whether you might not have looked a little higher—on such a young fellow, for instance, as we have just left down yonder, with a grand air, and well-fitting clothes, and pretty boots, and a sort of'—

She stopped him short with a grave face, and her slim fingers upon his wrist: 'And do you really think such things as that of me, John Denton?'

'I can't help thinking, Nelly. Don't be angry with me. I tease myself, as lovers do, with foolish thoughts of losing you—that's all.'

The firm strong voice of the overlooker had softened into speech as gentle as her own; his fine

eyes were full of tenderness; and his hand trembled in her grasp.

'I think that must be all, indeed,' said she; 'but I am sorry even for that much. I do not tease myself with such thoughts of you, John. I feel quite sure, that though you should get to be as wealthy as Mr Rhys, who is king of Slogan, or were made the engineer to the great railway that is coming, at thousands a year, you would still take Ellen Blackburn for your wife, penniless as she is, and notwithstanding the shame that clings'—

He placed his finger gently on her lips, and kissed her forehead. 'Hush, darling, hush! no word of that. You are quite right. I have no other aim in life but to make you mine; and yet—although Heaven knows I have yearned for you—I have preferred to wait until I had earned something: until I had built a wall to shield you from the bitter wind of want, so solid that it should keep my darling safe for ever.'

'Do not set your mind so much on wealth, John,' returned the young girl seriously. 'I have every day the evil of that before my eyes.'

'Yes, Ellen; but what your poor grandfather longs for is a will-o'-the-wisp. I heard even to-day that this young Richard Blackburn, into whose shoes he looks to step, is engaged to be married. Whereas, what I have fixed my eyes on is a reality; the dream of my life has already come true, thank God! I have been promised an appointment upon this very railway of which you spoke. Mr Rhys put the letter in my hands only last night; and when I have got it, Ellen, and I am sure to get it—look at me face to face—put your hands in mine—now answer me: will you be John Denton's wife in three months hence?'

'You know I will,' said she with a bright blush as he folded her in his arms; 'that is, if you can get my grandfather's consent. To him I owe everything in life, John, and I am sure you would not wish me to forget it.'

'There is no fear of your grandfather, Ellen, since I shall have your grandmother on my side,' said the young man confidently. 'It is to tell her this news that I am crossing Slogan with you to-day, and have left my men to take care of themselves. I think that two hundred a year and a house with eight rooms will recommend me to her good graces, eh? To think that five years ago I was but a pupil-teacher—though at the same school with you, darling, and therefore well placed enough—without a penny in the world!' and Denton's face glowed with conscious triumph.

'And I have not a penny still,' said the young girl sadly.

'Nay, you have what I have, my darling; "with all my worldly goods I thee endow;" that's in the marriage-service, you know.—Oh, tell me,' continued he with unwonted fervour, 'are you as happy as I? Did the heather ever seem so springy beneath your feet, or the sky so bright above your head? And does not our sky, too, appear without a cloud, my darling?'

'It is very bright, dear John,' answered she with a grave smile, 'and I am very happy; but it is not without a cloud.'

'I guess what you mean,' said he; 'but I do not see why the fact of your uncle being an unsatisfactory sort of person—well, a scoundrel, if one must call things by their right names—should

interpose between us and the sunshine. Why, the greatest people of this country, my dear, are mostly sprung from scoundrels—Norman robbers, courtly jobbers, and state intriguers of all sorts—and are certainly not thought the less of upon that account. Then, why should you and I distress ourselves about Uncle Will? Let us think of nothing but what is pleasant. See, upon your cottage window yonder, how the sun is glinting—the brightest welcome, notwithstanding that you are not within it, that it has ever beamed on me. It is surely an omen for good.'

CHAPTER III.—MOOR COTTAGE.

The cottage to which John Denton had ascribed the gift of augury was a homely one enough, but still superior to those inhabited by quarrymen generally. It had been once the residence of the bailiff of a great sheep-farmer; but since Slogan had borne a more profitable crop than scanty fleeces, the house had been unoccupied, and was rented very cheaply, by reason of its desolate and out-of-the-way position. It was fully three miles from any other residence, and set in the very heart of the hills. Not a tree, not a shrub grew near it, although in a deep gully close beside it were hid a few mountain-ashes; but yet in summer-time, as now, eye could scarcely light on a more charming spot. Rich people in town would have given much to be transported thither for a single August day. If the air could only have been bottled—as perhaps may happen some day—and the sunshine hermetically preserved within, it would have fetched guineas a dozen; and as it was, the view from the cottage door had been photographed, and delighted many a beholder who had never stood there in the flesh. A waste of purple moorland stretched before it, fringed to westward by a long jagged line of hills, beyond which rose still higher ranges, that in most days were lost in cloudland, but now stood out with the utmost clearness, each slab of stone distinct in its mountain wall. To the north, rose Slogan, immense, imperial; a giant cone unscathed on this side by man's ravages; to the east, lay the glittering ocean; and on the south, a promontory stretched far seaward, in the hollow of whose sandy bay a little town sparkled like a jewel.

Nature, however, which had thus put forth her best efforts to enhance this mountain dwelling, was but ill assisted by Art. The house—a one-storied building, with a roof of thatch, on which great stones were placed (as though it had been a mark for aerolites), to secure it against the violent winds—boasted but six small and scantily furnished rooms. Even in summer, the rough wind forced its way through the ill-fitting door and crazy windows, while in winter matters were wretched indeed; and it was to the inclemency of Moor Cottage that Ellen Blackburn chiefly owed her pale features and delicate frame. The fireplaces were not built upon scientific principles, and the peat-smoke, instead of taking the road provided for it to the upper air, wandered through the house, filling it with a cough-provoking haze, and blackening the low ceilings. The picturesqueness of the family poverty, in short (as usual), ceased with the external surroundings. Nor was the meanness or discomfort of the interior of the cottage redeemed by its solitary female inmate,

who could now be discerned by the young couple, as they drew near, standing in the doorway, and screening her eyes with her hand from the glare of the sun. She was watching them intently, and a gleam of satisfaction sat on her large and somewhat coarse features as she did so. Age and poor living do not improve folk's looks, and it was difficult to detect in that bony frame, and that ruddy but haggard face, even the faintest traces of the beauty for which Anthony Blackburn, in the heyday of his early manhood, had lost caste and fortune. Yet, fifty years ago, Mary Gryll had been the village beauty of the place where Anthony was the young squire: tall and finely proportioned; dark as a gipsy, but with a tenderness of expression in her splendid eyes that never gipsy wore. Even now her eyes were brilliant, and perhaps looked the more so by contrast with the loose and shrivelled skin in which they were set. Her teeth, too, were very regular and perfect, for one who had lived so long on such hard fare. Otherwise, there was nothing to distinguish her from any of her age and class, upon whom the primal curse of a too toilsome life seems to have fallen more heavily than on the sex against which it was pronounced. Her dress was sordid and ragged; and as she stood with her sleeves rolled half-way up her arms, it was only too manifest that personal cleanliness was no longer one of Mrs Blackburn's virtues.

She welcomed John Denton very heartily, and dusted a chair for his reception in spite of his efforts to prevent her. It did her good, she said, to see him, almost as much (she added with a sly look) as it did her grand-daughter. How kind it was of him to leave the works where he was always so busy, to accompany Ellen across the moor. It was evident, in short, that Mrs Blackburn was anxious as ever was Belgravian mother in the case of an eligible *parti*, to encourage the young over-looker in the prosecution of his addresses, and that she did not even need to hear the good news he brought with him to favour his suit.

That two hundred a year, indeed, with the house with eight rooms, seemed to sound in her ears as almost too great a stroke of fortune, for after one involuntary lifting up of her hands, she began sighing and shaking her head.

'Ah, well,' said she, 'then, I suppose, this is the last visit as you will pay us poor folks, Mr Denton? You will be too proud and too great a man to come to Moor Cottage, I warrant; for that's only the way of the world.'

'I don't know as to that, Mrs Blackburn,' returned the over-looker with some indignation, for he did not understand the feminine craft of his hostess; 'but it is not *my* way, I do assure you: if I was ever so rich, I should be only proud because I had the wealth to offer Ellen. I value her far above house and income, and it was only for her sake that I have waited until I had won them, to ask your consent to our marriage.'

'And that you shall have, John Denton,' returned Mrs Blackburn enthusiastically, while she held out her two huge hands for him to shake. 'I won't kiss you,' chuckled she, 'because I dare say you had rather that that were done by deputy.'

Not to contradict a lady and his grandmother-in-law elect to boot, John applied to the proxy thus indicated upon the spot, who executed the order accordingly, though not without some modest diffidence.

'Deary me!' continued the old woman approvingly, 'how much better is this, Ellen—a hard-working, well-to-do young fellow, with his nice little income, and house with eight rooms—not more than you will want in time, young people, I daresay—than any of those fancy matches which your grandfather is always inventing for you, with the great folks of Derbyshire! A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush—that's my motto. I've lived on hopes too long myself not to know it's but lean meat. There's some as likes castles in the air, but I'd exchange the very finest of them, with park and grounds complete, for an eight-roomed house built of Slogan stone! Money we have not to offer with your bride, John; but I am an old housewife, and shall be able to come and give you many a hint or two as to this and that, which will help to save, if not to get.'

'Indeed, Mrs Blackburn, we shall be glad to make use of any hint you may please to give us,' returned John, whose naturally keen perceptions were entirely blunted for the time by the contiguity of his charmer, or he would surely not have thus surrendered hearth and home at discretion at the first blast of a grandmother-in-law's trumpet.

'You speak, I'm sure, most fair and kind,' said the old woman; 'and it's quite a pleasure to listen to such talk, after having nothing but complaints so long, and looking for nothing but disappointments: you shall have my good word, and welcome, with my husband, John Denton; and all I can say is, that if his answer is not "yes," when you ask for our Ellen, he must be downright deprived of his wits. I thought him foolish enough in opposing you of old (for I have always stood your friend with him); but now, if he objects to you still, being in such an excellent position, I shall get out of all patience, and speak my mind right out. However, let us hope he will not thus fly in the face of Providence.'

'Amen!' answered Denton with a grave smile. 'But, at all events, I do not think he will oppose himself to our happiness, for a certain reason, for which I should otherwise—for his sake—be sorry. I have heard to-day that young Mr Richard Blackburn is engaged to be married.'

'They Blackburns are always for marrying early,' said the old woman bitterly. 'But there, it's not for me to complain,' added she with a sigh. 'I will do Anthony the justice to say that, during all his trouble, he has never once reproached me, but only his own unnatural kin.—Going to marry, is he? and without a father to say him nay to whomsoever he chooses. She will not be flattered with hopes of being a grand lady, and then find herself even worse off than the poor stock from which she sprang. Her boys will be brought up delicately, out of the reach of all temptation—leastways, to do such things as the law takes count of.' Here the old woman's rough tones became strangely soft and pitiful, and her eyes filled with tears. 'There's a verse in the Bible somewhere as says that "The destruction of the poor is their poverty;" I wonder whether the rich ever read it, or know what it means.'

Denton and Ellen kept silence; but the latter rose, and put her arms about her grandmother's neck, and kissed her.

'You're a good girl, Ellen,' said the old woman quietly. 'Your father was a good man—too good for this world—and you take after him. But all

of us are not born so gentle and enduring. Even John here, had he been tried as some has been tried'—

'Nay, grandmother, why should we talk of these things now?' pleaded the young girl.

'Ah, why, indeed,' responded Mrs Blackburn; 'why think of the absent and the erring, when all is going so smoothly with ourselves? That is what your grandfather says—although, Heaven knows, it is not because things go so smoothly with him; sixty-eight, and nothing saved against the poor-house'—

'What!' interrupted Denton suddenly. 'Do you think it possible, Mrs Blackburn, that I should permit those who had brought up my darling here so well and loyally, to come to such a pass as that? For the future, when you think upon your granddaughter, I beg of you to remember that you have a grandson also.'

'I thank you, John Denton, but I have a son of my own alive,' was the cold reply; and with that Mrs Blackburn stepped firmly across the room, and went out at the open door, while the two young people looked at one another with mutual embarrassment. The poor woman's pride supported her until she was out of their sight and hearing; but as soon as she reached the little gully of which we have spoken, and which was the only place of concealment for miles around, she sat down beneath one of the mountain-ashes, and sobbed as though her heart would break.

'O Willy, Willy,' cried she, wringing her large gaunt hands, 'why is it I cannot give them the lie, when men speak evil against you, and why must a stranger and not you be your parents' prop?'

As she sat moaning thus with her face in her hands, and rocking herself to and fro, she was unconscious of the approach of a little ragged boy, who came whistling leisurely up the glen. He addressed her twice, and even shook her arm before he could gain her attention. 'Here's a letter for you, missis,' said he, holding out a missive which had not a little suffered from contact with his dirty hands.

'For me?' cried she, snatching at it eagerly. 'Oh, is it from my Willy?'

'How should I know, unless I read it?' answered the young gentleman scornfully. 'And I think I ought to get summat extra for that. The postman says as how you were to pay me fourpence—'cause you're beyond the delivery. Mr Blackburn always pays that, he says, for all his letters, and it don't come to a thousand a year neither even at that price.'

'I'll go in and get the money, my lad,' said Mrs Blackburn, staring at the envelope she held tightly in her hand, and too deeply lost in thought to be cognizant of the small messenger's impertinence. 'Who can be writing to Anthony?' muttered she. 'It is surely the same hand that wrote the news of Richard Blackburn's death, and like it, it has a black rim!' As she looked up thoughtfully, she beheld far across the moor the form of John Denton striding swiftly away in the direction of Slogan. 'That's well,' mused she. 'I could never have kept it from him that something had come. How my poor hand shakes, and how my knees tremble under me!'

'Come, missis; I was told not to give up the letter without the fourpence,' resumed the shrill

voice of the boy. 'You must please to fork out the money.'

'You shall have sixpence, if you'll only wait a minute,' gasped the old woman; 'that will be twopence for yourself.' Then she fell to turning the letter over and over, and feeling it about. 'It has something in it,' said she softly, 'or it must be a very long letter, and folks don't write long letters to beggars like us.' Then she looked upward to the blue sky, and into her eyes came an ineffable tenderness that brought back to them for an instant their beauty of half a century ago.

'If Anthony is right after all,' ejaculated she—'O dear, if he is really right, my Willy will come back to us again!' and still keeping her gaze fixed upon the letter, she slowly turned towards the cottage.

A TWO-WHEELED STEED.

I AM not ashamed to admit having always cherished a peculiar admiration, at one time amounting to awe, for anything that would go round. A wheel has never been without its charm for me. I remember, at school, the affection with which I regarded wheels of all sorts, and how all my favourite toys as a child were rotary ones. The knife-grinder who used periodically to stop in front of our play-ground gates to grind the young gentlemen's knives, has probably died without knowing the inward comfort he administered to my breast, through the opportunities he afforded me of seeing his wheel go round at public expense.

Only the other day, I confided to an old friend that I still possessed a sneaking regard for wheels, and though he rewarded my confidence with a pitiful sneer, I know that this wretched old hypocrite himself keeps a wonderful brass top that will spin for an hour, under a glass case on his study-table, and in secret delights to watch it in motion.

A clever marine engineer, who loves wheels too, once told me with great gravity that the human mind has never yet discovered anything so wonderful as the principle of the common wheelbarrow, 'an invention,' he said, 'to which that of the steam-engine itself is nothing. The wheelbarrow,' he went on, 'is the only example I am acquainted with in which the very weight of a load is fairly utilised as a locomotive power.' There was a copy of *Punch* on my table. Our conversation had turned to the subject of wheelbarrows from looking at Mr Keene's vignette, in which, some three years ago, Mr Punch was depicted as Blondin, but performing the impossible feat of wheeling *himself* in a wheelbarrow along a tight-rope in the Crystal Palace transept. My engineer friend then remarked that, putting aside the tight-rope business, he was firmly convinced that Mr Keene had in jest represented what would by-and-by be accepted in serious earnest as the only correct principle on which to construct a self-driven vehicle—namely, employing the *weight of the body* as a propelling power, and relying on the fact of motion as the means of balance. One thing will at least be conceded by any person who will take the trouble to turn to the sketch, and that is, notwithstanding all recognised notions and experience to the contrary, the picture of a man driving himself in a wheelbarrow looks strangely plausible, probably from the fact, that the mind of the observer com-

municates motion to the wheel, and is satisfied to receive that as the explanation of the balance.

The two-wheeled velocipede or bicycle is in part a realisation of Mr Keene's picture. It depends upon motion for its balance. The two wheels, one in front of the other, with a saddle between, whether mounted by a rider or not, will not stand upright for a single instant at rest; but, like the boy's hoop, *being kept trolling*, they maintain a perfect equilibrium.

The bicycle can hardly be called a 'new invention,' being to a great extent a modification of that very old toy-vehicle of our fathers, the hobby-horse, whereon the rider used to sit and row himself along, so to speak, by paddling with his feet on the ground; at the same time, the entire reliance on the principle that motion would be, under any circumstances, sufficient to produce balance, is sufficiently novel almost to justify the use of such a term. The French appear to be entitled to whatever of credit attaches to the original invention of the hobby-horse (a miserable steed at best, which wore out the toes of a pair of boots at every journey. M. Blanchard, the celebrated aeronaut, and M. Masurier conjointly manufactured the first of these machines in 1779, which was then described as 'a wonder which drove all Paris mad.' The French are probably justified, moreover, in claiming as their own the development of this crude invention into the present velocipede, for, in 1862, a M. Rivière, a French subject, residing in England, deposited in the British Patent Office a minute specification of a machine identical with that now in use. His description was, however, unaccompanied by any drawing or sketch, and he seems to have taken no further steps in the matter than to register a theory which he never carried into practice. Subsequently, the bicycle was re-invented by the French and by the Americans almost simultaneously, and indeed, both nations claim priority in introducing it. It came into public notoriety at the last French International Exhibition, from which time the rage for them has gradually developed itself, until in this present 1869, it may be said, much as it was a century ago, that Paris has again been driven mad on velocipedes.

Extensive foundries are now established in Paris for the sole purpose of supplying the iron-work, while some scores of large manufactories are taxing their utmost resources to meet the daily increasing demand for these vehicles. The prices of good serviceable velocipedes range from two hundred and fifty to four hundred francs (ten to sixteen pounds), at a less price than which a really good machine cannot be obtained either in England or France. The best French pattern is that of Michaux et Cie., which is the one now adopted by most of the English builders with more or less correctness. The height of the driving-wheel most suitable for general use is three feet.

The advantages of the bicycle over the three and four wheeled velocipedes are many and considerable. It is less than half the weight of the old machine, being but a little over forty pounds; and the friction is reduced to something like two-thirds. The power operating directly on the cranks, instead of being communicated through long levers, is wholly utilised, whilst the motion of the feet is more analogous to that of walking. When once accustomed to the use of the

two-wheeled velocipede, it is not at all fatiguing, whereas the many-wheelers condemn their riders to a term of hard labour. As the result of several months' experience in driving a bicycle, I have no hesitation in estimating it as a clear gain of five to one in comparison with walking; that is to say, the rider may go five miles with the same expenditure of labour as in walking one, and after a journey of fifty miles he will feel no more fatigue than after having walked ten. Notwithstanding appearances to the contrary to the unaccustomed eye, the bicycle is, moreover, a *safer* machine than any velocipede with three wheels, and far more under control. To turn a corner with a three-wheeler at anything like speed, is a most hazardous experiment, resulting almost certainly in a 'spill'—because the speed lifts the hind-wheel describing the outermost circle, from the ground; whereas the two-wheeler, when on the turn, stands at an inclination like a skater's body, more or less acute according to the quickness of the curve to be described.

With regard to the speed which may be attained, fifteen miles an hour, under the most favourable circumstances, that is, good hard road, *not* level, but without very steep hills, and no wind blowing, is probably the limit of the velocipede's powers; but a pace of nine or ten miles an hour may be maintained for five or six hours without distress. Long journeys on level road are perhaps the most fatiguing, on account of their monotony, because then the feet, as in walking, are nearly always at work. Still, even in this case, the driver can maintain his speed with one foot, resting the other on the leg-rest; or, if disposed, he may even place both feet on the rests, and run four or five hundred yards without working at all. The slightly increased labour of climbing a hill is nothing to the zest imparted by a knowledge that there is sure to be a hill the other side to go down, and that is the most luxurious travelling that can be imagined. Descending an incline at full speed, balanced on a beautifully tempered steel spring that takes every jolt from the road—wheels spinning over the ground so lightly they scarce seem to touch it—the driver's legs rested comfortably on the cross-bar in front—shooting the hill at a speed of thirty or forty miles an hour—the sensation is only comparable to that of flying, and is worth all the pains it costs in learning to experience it. The velocipedist feels but one pang when he reaches the bottom of a hill, and that is, that it is over; and but one exquisite wish, which is, that the entire country might somehow become metamorphosed into down-hill. But the hill is bountiful even after one has left it, for the impetus derived from a good incline will carry the rider at least the hill's length on level ground before he need remove his feet from the rests and commence working again. The slightest incline on a good road is sufficient to obviate all necessity for working with the feet, so that what little labour there is (and it is of the easiest), is by no means incessant. In a journey of twenty miles on good road, a driver should not work more than twelve—the inclines do the rest. Of course, there are hills so steep that to ascend them is impossible: yet, for myself, living in a hilly county, which I have pretty well explored on my two-wheeled steed, I can reckon up their number on the fingers of one hand. There are also hills where the labour

becomes as much as, or more than, walking, but these must be of a gradient something like one in twelve, and such hills are not frequent. When they do occur, the rider may, if he will, dismount. It is a subject of smiling pity to many of the uninitiated to behold a velocipedist dragging his horse after him up a hill—and cruelly realised, too, in the case of three and four wheeled machines; but the bicycle is better than any walking-stick to assist a person up an incline, even when only walking beside it. Resting one elbow on the saddle, and leaning the weight of the body on that, while guiding the handle with the other hand, the machine becomes a positive assistance instead of an incumbrance. This sounds like fiction, but it is fact. *Experto crede.*

There are persons who advertise to teach the use of the velocipede in 'a few hours.' Not long ago an enterprising French master advertised to teach the French language (in the intervals of seasickness) during the voyage from Dover to Calais. It should not be concealed that it requires as much time to learn the use of the bicycle as to learn to skate—and there are also occasional falls incidental to learning either. To urge the time necessary to acquire its use as an objection against the two-wheeled steed, would, however, be manifestly unjust. So difficult is it to balance the human body on merely two small legs and a pair of feet, in an upright position (a position such as would be scarcely possible to make an exact model of a man, even *without* life, retain for a single instant), that it has taken most of us a twelve-month to learn how to do that. It is sufficient to say that a person may attain the management of a two-wheeled steed in less time than that of a four-footed one, and when he has done so, for speed, endurance, and inexpensiveness, the former will at least bear favourable comparison with the latter. As in skating, a week's steady and persevering practice is needful to acquire a comfortable balance, and gain control over the unaccustomed form of support. The 'falls' referred to above, as happening in learning the velocipede, are nothing to those incurred in learning to skate. No one should mount a bicycle until he is acquainted with the way to get off, which is really the first lesson. Whichever way the machine is going to fall, the learner has only to put out his foot on that side. His foot being not more than three inches from the ground, the horse, in the act of falling, will deliver him safe on *terra firma*, if he will only let it, whilst, by retaining his grasp of the handles, the rider at once balances himself on alighting, and saves the velocipede from falling. Some difficulty in remounting without help is sure to be experienced by a learner. For a month he must content himself with the assistance of the first post or gate or palings he sees by the wayside; but he will soon discard such assistance, and be able to vault on the saddle whilst his horse is in motion. Good hard road is essential for velocipede-driving. In muddy or loose gravelly road, the work becomes proportionately laborious. But with good 'going ground,' it is difficult to convey how little labour is really required to maintain a high rate of speed—in fact, the great trouble with beginners is to get them to restrain the expenditure of muscular force. Velocipede-driving is, I believe from experience, most healthy and exhilarating, since it exercises all the muscles of the limbs in a manner much more

uniform than would at first be credited, and certainly without undue strain on any part of the body. To the spectator, the velocipedist appears almost wholly to employ his legs, but in reality the muscles of the arms are in strong tension in the act of grasping the handles, so as to counteract the motion of the feet on the pedals, which motion would otherwise tend to sway the wheel from side to side. In fact, after a long journey, the driver will feel more fatigue in his arms than in his legs. Once mastered, the two-wheeled steed is a docile and tractable animal, equally sensitive to bit and bridle, and a sturdy friend to the traveller. For him the pike-men throw open their gates without asking for toll. He needs neither corn nor beans, nor hay nor straw, neither hostler nor stableman. His stable is a bit of the passage-wall, against which he reposes, without taking up any room, until his master needs him again—his only food, a pennyworth of neat's-foot oil per month.

There is a Japanese sauce surnamed the 'Maker to Eat.' It will have little charm to the palate of him who drives a bicycle; for, be he the veriest epicure of the epicurean sort, he will, after a three hours' run, possess an appetite to which the most homely bread and cheese appears dainty.

At present, the bicycle is regarded, in England, very much in the light of a toy, and its practice as a pastime: not so in Paris and New York, where persons of all grades may be seen solemnly and seriously going to their daily business on two wheels. Now that the supposition about the new velocipedes frightening horses has been proved to be groundless, there seems little reason to doubt they will become equally popular in this country; and that after the first 'rage' for the novelty has died away, the two-wheeled steed may drop into its proper place as a serviceable nag, that can do a great deal of work in a very little time, and, after the first cost, at a very inconsiderable expense.

HISTORY VIA POETRY.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

WHEN a great statesman (as has been more than once the case of late) puts forth a poem, or a theological essay, or when an actor, whose rôle has hitherto been comedy, essays to play Lear, we who have admired each in his proper part, are more curious than hopeful to see how they will acquit themselves under their new circumstances. We think of the great Wellington's statesmanship, of Liston, who would persist in maintaining that his genius was tragic, and of cobblers generally who have gone into the hat trade; but still we are very curious and expectant. It was with some such expectancy, some such doubt, that we saw advertised *Chaucer's England*, by Matthew Browne,* remembering that the same *nom de plume* was annexed to that most charming of booklets, *Liliput Levee*. What might not be expected in the way of humour, frolicsome glee, and pathos from that Laureate of the Little Folks; but then, on the other hand, only think of his writing a history! Dates! genealogies! products (tallow, hides, flax, &c.)! *Chaucer's England* too! Edward III.'s England, with such maps, and illustrations with women with horns, and men with toes tied to

their knees, all out of perspective! It must surely, thought we, be only another delightful book for the young people.

And it is a delightful book, though not for the nursery. It is a strange plan to begin with, this proving of the Past upon the unconscious evidence of a poet, this reaping our information from the fields of song; but in Chaucer's case it is less difficult, perhaps, than from any other English verse-writer. It would be hopeless indeed for some future Matthew Browne to found a theory of how men and women in England lived to-day from the works of Tennyson or Browning. They are 'suggestive' enough indeed, but scarcely of solid matters of fact; whereas Chaucer was essentially the poet of observation. He sang of what he saw; of the visible external world around him; he drew such pictures of his time as Hogarth drew, except—and a very wide difference it is, though by no means a disadvantage to the duly qualified historical student—that he was also a poet. Everybody knows Chaucer was occasionally a coarse writer—and something worse. He has published his own disclaimer. 'God have mercy on me,' he says, 'and forgive me my giltes, and nameliche my translacions and of endityng in worldly vanities, whiche I revoke in my retracciouns, as is the book of Troyles, the book also of Fame, the book of twenty-five Ladies, the book of the Duchesses, the book of seint Valentines day and of the Parlement of briddes, the Tales of Caunterbury, alle thilke that sounen into synne, the book of the Leo, and many other bokes, if they were in my mynde or remembrance, and many a song and many a lecherous lay, of the whiche Crist for his grete mercy forgoe me the synnes.' In his youth, he wrote very loosely; in his manhood, loosely; in his old age, with gravity and repentance. But even this, as our author shews, is a curious corroboration of what we know of his times. 'He was too receptive a person not to take to that portion of the faith of his day which made repentance and bead-telling' and a hortatory disposition the proper things in an old man. We, who look upon faith, devotion, and repentance of wrongdoing as things for the whole of a man's life, and not for his old age only, cannot help smiling at the medieval view of the subject. But we must take care not to smile unkindly. The whole theory of life and duty in those days was one of classification of persons, functions, seasons, foods, and occupations. That one part of life was intended to be more religiously lived out than another, would not seem so very absurd to a man whose church told him to eat no flesh on Wednesdays and Fridays, and gave him absolution for confessed sin upon penance done as often as he liked to come for it. In the middle ages, caste was moral as well as social and civic. The knight was to put lance in rest; the clerk was to be learned, "morall of sentaunce;" the parson was to preach, and to be a great deal more religious than his people; while those that "ben seculare" may, by the side of all this, do pretty much as they please. This is the organisation of life; virtues and offices are divided and apportioned; and the church overlooks the motley throng with blessing or ban in her power.

Whatever Englishmen were in his own day, that we may be pretty sure Chaucer was: he is the most English of all our writers. Even his

* London: Hurst and Blackett.

coarseness (which is certainly a national quality) may be partly excused upon that ground. He is a thorough 'good fellow.' 'His poetry is penetrated with the social spirit. He loves the haunts of men, the places where they dwell, the episodes of mutual need that bring and keep them together; meat and drink; industry and play; the uprisings and downittings, the incomings and outgoings of men and women. . . . A steady breeze of strong human feeling flows through his writing; he keeps you in the open air of life. Thus Chaucer, as an author, seems, even though he wrote in verse, especially fitted as a witness in the case we are considering, the habits of life of our ancestors of five hundred years ago. His social position also gave him peculiar opportunities of observation. 'He was a gentleman, a courtier, an ambassador, and a soldier; perhaps a man of business too, though we have no means of knowing *how* he filled the public offices which he held under the crown during some portions of his life. His descriptions of life and pictures of character could only have come from a writer who was a man of the world (as well as a scholar and a poet); he was connected by various links with persons and events which are prominent in one of the most splendid eras of English history; and his *Canterbury Tales* contain, more "Englishness" than any other poem in the language. For these reasons, he may fairly be taken as a typical person, so that no impertinence can be charged against such a title as *Chaucer's England*.'

In this book will be found the most exquisite appreciation of the poetry of Chaucer that it has yet received, not even excepting the graceful introduction of him by Leigh Hunt, who has acted as master of the ceremonies to so many poets, who, but for him, would be 'caviare to the general.' Mr Browne reminds us of that bright affectionate writer very strongly: he has inherited his graceful fancy, his subtle yet sprightly wit, and also (for which we do not admire him the less) that excessive delicacy of appreciation which dull critics have termed 'finical.' In order to the complete enjoyment of the Chaucerian music, says our author gravely, 'the reader undoubtedly ought to know a little French, a little German, and perhaps' [think of this!] '*perhaps a little Anglo-Saxon*.' This is Leigh Hunt again, all over, and reminds one of his recommendation to use at family prayer (although he owns the thing can be done without it) 'some musical instrument, such as a *seraphine*.'

As most people are unacquainted with Anglo-Saxon, and are not likely to 'go in' for it, even with the object of 'the complete enjoyment of the Chaucerian music,' we shall use Mr Browne's translation when necessary, instead of quoting the poet's words. His style is equal to that of our best historians. This is how the time of Chaucer is introduced to us. 'The chimney is added to the house, the glass-window replaces the lattice or the shutter; the gun threatens the bow and arrow with extinction; Adam Scrivener "lothly" lays down his penner when the click of movable types becomes loud; dress begins to *think* of lopping off its entangling superfluities, and suiting itself to the wants of a people going busily to and fro; the dignity and prestige of the priestly person is threatened, and more remotely that of the soldier, an element clearly traceable in the spirit of the

times; lastly, religious persecution lights the torch to burn the heretic—and we feel that we are in England. To-morrow the first printing-press will be set up under the shadow of Westminster Abbey; and after the Bible, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* will be the first book printed.' It has been objected to this great poet that his thoughts are often without originality, merely the clothing of a saw or a truism in verse; but even this, as our author shews, was an illustration of the times. 'In his time, the very idea of originality as a supreme merit in literature had not taken possession of men's minds. The merit of a "clerk" in those days was to know what other men had written. His own peculiar skill was shewn in selection—unless he had genius, as Chaucer had, in which case the genius did its own work more or less unconsciously, and gave invention *in*—the originality was in excess of the bargain between him and his readers, but there it was.' Chaucer's own ideas of true worth were only too original—as compared with the flimsy and conventional notions of it which we find so prevalent to-day. Five hundred years before Burns wrote 'the rank is but the guinea's stamp, the man's the gold for a' that,' Chaucer wrote:

Vice may wel be heyre to olde richesse,
But there may no man, as ye may wel see,
Byquethe his sone his vertuous noblesse;
That is apperperid to no degree,
But to the firste Fader in Magestee,
Which maketh His heires hem that doone Him
queme,
Al were he miter, corone or diademe.

Such arrogance, says he (in the *Wife of Bath's Tale*), as pride of birth is 'not worth a hen.'

Look who that is most vertuous alway,
Privé and pert, and most entendith ay
To do the gentil dedes that he can,
Tak him for the grettest gentil man.
Christ wol we clayme of him oure gentillesse.

We are apt to imagine that the medieval times were much more influenced by caste than our own, but, as our author takes occasion to shew, the social feeling was much more active than the caste feeling. Human beings were thrown more *directly* upon each other for much of the help which they can now obtain at second-hand. People of diverse rank and culture were drawn together in a thousand ways, where they would now be apart; and 'high and low, layman and clerk, lady and soldier, would be kept in presence of the primordial facts of life, at no great distance from each other. The word truckle-bed would alone furnish a text for a discussion on this subject. The truckle-bed was a small low bed on truckles, which was placed at the foot of the great or state bed of a person of consequence. In the smaller bed would sleep the esquire of the knight, or the henchman of the esquire, ready to help his superior in the night, in rising, or in going to bed. Now this state of things, though it does not belong to an age of bell-ropes, gutta-percha tubing, dressing-rooms, and the like, is much more "human," and obviously brought people closer together. . . . It must also be noted that, sharply drawn as were the lines of rank and station in the middle ages, the distinctions were kept up pretty much by superficial signs, which left the undermost roots of things very much the same in the consciousness of

all persons concerned. . . . The superiority of the privileged classes was signified and guarded more by trappings and splendour of apparel and furniture than by fundamental differences in people's habits.' Thus the idea of the Canterbury pilgrims all going in cavalcade together, the Knight and the Miller, the Country Gentleman and the Bailiff, the Lady Abbess and the Wife of Bath, is not socially outrageous; and whether or not, it is positively certain the tales told on the pilgrimage contain, both in the prologue and the stories, 'some of the most exact pictures of English life that ever were transmitted at any time in English history, by any pen.'

Take, for instance, his description of the miller. In all old-fashioned song, the miller is a prominent personage, since he belonged to 'a time when the relations of the man who grew the corn, the man who ground it, and the people who ate the bread, were much more direct than they are now; in Chaucer's time, indeed, the miller was the immediate servant of the lord of the manor, to whom belonged the exclusive right of grinding the corn grown upon his estate. One almost always likes to read of him, too' [and here dear Leigh Hunt's voice is recognisable in every tone], 'because he can scarcely be mentioned without recalling the picture of the mill itself; ever, to my thinking, one of the prettiest spots in a landscape.' Well, Chaucer's miller is a rough fellow enough, one who, 'as Mr Carlyle says of Oliver Cromwell, is decidedly not of the "man-milliner" or "patent digester" species. He has plenty of bone and plenty of flesh; he is a wrestler who could always feel sure of bearing away the customary prize—a ram; short-necked, broad-shouldered, and with, presumably, short thick legs, for I believe when an ox is said to be short-shouldered the legs are short. He could heave up a door with his shoulders, or knock it in with his head by running at it—the sort of head for the game of singlestick, or quintin, or any other of the athletic sports which were common in Chaucer's days, and much later. The next touch is very characteristic: you can imagine the red, bristly beard, in shape like a spade. At the top of his nose is a wart, with a tuft of red hair in it, "red as the bristles of a sow's ears." His nostrils are dark and spreading. His mouth is as wide as an oven. This is a description to frighten little boys and girls withal; there is no necessity to add that the miller carried a sword and shield with him. Naturally, he had a white coat, after the manner of millers; and then, for beauty's sake, a blue hood. Besides the usual vice of his trade—the tendency to take excessive toll—he is a noisy gossip and a teller of stories

Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences
Unmeet for ladies.

It is a natural incident of such a character that the man should be noisy; and we are not surprised to find that he carries a bagpipe, with which he blows the pilgrims out of town, just, I suppose, as the old mail coach-guards used to blow their horns as the coaches rolled out at St Martin's-le-Grand in the evening. This last touch completes the strangeness of the picture; the bagpipe being mentioned quite as a matter of course, as if it were a common instrument; which it was in the days of Chaucer, though we are accustomed to think of it as an

instrument quite unendurable except on the Scotch hills.'

Contrasted with the miller, drunk and unsteady on his horse, we have the reeve or bailiff. 'Dropping obvious anachronisms, this is pretty much the sort of figure a modern novelist would paint for a house-agent or attorney, or tax-gatherer or excise-man. We have here, upon a gray horse, called Scot (which is said to be invariably the name of a horse in Norfolk), a thin, peppery, close-shaven, close-cut man, with legs that were not only long, but so thin that they were "like a staff; there was no calf seen," says Chaucer. He was a treasure to his lord, whose accounts he had kept under hand since the lord of the manor was twenty years of age. No auditor could bring him in as indebted for arrears; but he drove sharp bargains with other bailiffs and with the herdsmen and others; "they knew his sleight and his covin;" and were afraid of him—"as of the death," says Chaucer. And no doubt in earlier times the power of life and death had been very much in the hands of a reeve who was on terms of favouritism with his lord; for under the feudal system, although the lord of the manor was bound to hold a manorial court, which was usually held in the great hall of the manor-house, upon offenders, yet, of course, the power of condemning a serf to death, *fossa or furca* (that is, the gallows for a man, the pond for a woman) was very much in the hands of the lord: the mere fact that any person might in those days be accused of witchcraft must have given immense power to bad people who had ends to gain. We are told that this reeve was a capital farmer, store-keeper, and stock-keeper, and that, like other middlemen, he knew how to enrich himself. He lived in a "full fair" house upon a common, with trees around it (a suggestion of a park evidently), and could even lend to his master; who would reward him occasionally with a new hood and cloak, and condescend to thank him. The reeve had on a long sky-blue coat, and carried a rusty sword; being stingy and more accustomed to use the saw and the hammer than to fight, for Chaucer says he was a good carpenter—which means, for those times, much the same thing as a builder, and implies that he was very useful to his lord in providing or altering the huts of the tenantry.'

The knight, again, presented by Chaucer is a thoroughly 'representative man.' He tells us 'he had ridden far, a chivalric adventurer, defending truth and the ladies, and fighting in his lord's wars—no man further—both in Christendom and in the Holy Land. He had often been served first at the board, because of his nobleness; and his ransom, when he fell into captivity, was high. He was wise (or humble and discreet), and, though brave as a lion, as gentle as a woman. Nor did he make any display in his person or dress. He rode a good horse, but was himself not "gay" to look at. His cascock of fustian was marked by his hauberk, but he had not changed his clothes on returning late from his travels: such was his devotion that he had gone straight on pilgrimage.' Accompanying the knight, and standing next to him in the order of courtesy, stands his son, the squire. 'He has been a good while "in chivachie;" that is, out of his apprenticeship as a knightly man, expecting some time to be himself invested. Being strong and brave, he will soon win his spurs; but at present his prize is "his lady's grace." He is

courteous, and, according to the chivalric code, full of ready serviceableness. That he carves the meat for his father is a matter of course; it was the duty of an esquire. He curls his hair egregiously. He is exquisitely got up—"as fresh as the month of May" to look at; and has so many flowers about him, that he is positively embroidered with white and red roses—the flowers of love and knighthood. He is strictly in the fashion of the day, with the short tunic that the clergy so hotly denounced as indelicate. He can joust, of course, and dance well—which latter the clerk cannot do—and he has the clerk's accomplishment besides; for he can write and draw an illuminated letter. He is so eager a votarist of the faith of chivalry, too, that he scarcely sleeps at all; he is up all night (as the nightingale was *supposed* to be) composing or singing love-songs. This young squire appears to have a lady of his own, whose favour he hopes to win; but "so hot he loved" need not, by itself, imply that; for a young man might, by the laws of chivalry, love vaguely: not only a lady whom he had never seen, which was a common thing; but he might simply love the universal essence of female beauty and goodness, if he could, as the metaphysicians say, posit it, so as to bring it within the range of an emotion.' This metaphysical sort of love-making is hard to be credited of so material an age—an age exhibiting the Wife of Bath, for instance, as a common type—yet our present author, in chapters much too long for quotation here, does seem to prove that what appears to us an absurdity in the romance literature of that date, was more or less a fact; that beauty and tenderness in women did elicit some mysterious sort of *cultus*, or worship, quite independent of the sexual passion. It is one of the few statements in these volumes in which we find ourselves unable to agree with Mr Matthew Browne.

Even more characteristic of their time than the knight or squire, are the pardoner and the somp-nour—the man who had church pardons to sell, and carried relics in his pocket, also for sale. This gentleman was musical; he carried a vernicle, or picture of the head of Christ. In his mall or wallet were 'pardons come from Rome, all hot,' along with a piece of the Virgin's veil, and pigs' bones ('for saints'); yet could fill his place in church, and read and sing the offertory, well. 'The pardoner says that, when he preaches in church, he does it with a loud, commanding voice; for he has learned by rote what he has got to say, so that he has no need to hesitate. His theme is always one, and ever was—namely, that the root of evils is the love of money. "First," says he, "I declare whence I come (namely, from Rome), and I exhibit my bulls, and warn the folks that none of them be so bold as to disturb me in the holy work of Christ. Then I take care to speak a few words in Latin, in order to flavour my discourse, and to stir men to devotion. After this I produce my relics; for instance, a bone that was once part of a sheep belonging to a *holy Jew*, and I inform the rustics that this saint's relic will cure diseases of various kinds in his live-stock, and so forth.'" This gentleman goes on to confess that he knows a hundred tricks more, and, among the rest, that his relic kills jealousy; 'a pleasant suggestion, once more,' remarks our author, 'of what ecclesiastical people were accustomed to think of the domestic life of

the rude laymen of the period. Do you think, continues the pardoner, that I am going to follow the example of the apostles, and labour with my hands at basket-making, as Paul did at tent-making? No; I will go on begging, and have money, cheese, wool, and wheat, though I squeeze it out of the priest's errand-boy or the poorest widow in the village.' Now Chaucer's realism is admitted on all hands. 'He had no thought of posterity, nor of Protestantism, when he painted this portrait of a popish pardoner; and who can wonder, therefore, that Wickliffe arose in England, and that the echo of his footsteps did not die out till Luther arose in Germany.' The somp-nour, or summoner (the ecclesiastical officer whose function it was to summon immoral folks before the archdeacon), is painted in still darker colours. By bribery and base compacts with bad people, this man is always contriving to impound something in the archdeacon's court, and to make money out of it. He thinks morality is for other people; and makes the worst possible use of his power over the young women in his diocese. When he is in his cups, which is often, he is full of law and scraps of Latin.

The friar comes off but little better than his two church confrères; one friar is described as begging, while another writes down on his tablets the name of any person who gives, assuring him that he would be 'prayed' for accordingly.

Gif us a bussel whet, or malt, or reye,
A Goddes kichil [*cake*], or a trip of chese,
Or elles what yow list, we may not chese;
A Goddes halpeny, or a masse peny;
Or gif us of youre braune, if ye have eny,
A dagoun [*piece*] of your blanket, levee dame,
Oure suster deer—lo! her I write your name—
Bacoun or beef, or such thing as we fynde.

All is fish that comes to their net. They are not particular, as, indeed, how should pious friars be. 'A capon's liver, with a slice of soft bread, and a roasted pig's head, are all I want—indeed, I would not that you should serve up your best for such as *me*. I live chiefly on Holy Writ.'

Well may our author remark, that between monks, friars, clerks, and summoners, it is pretty clear, even after the humourist's licence has been handsomely allowed for, life in Chaucer's England must have been honeycombed with ecclesiastical meddling. It is true that the company were not without their good priest—the poor parson—the poor halfpennyworth of bread to all this sack. And it is a beautiful portrait—

Such as the heaven-taught skill of Herbert drew,
And tender Goldsmith crowned with deathless
praise.

This excellent minister of God would rather forgive his tithes to his poor parishioners than press for them, and being satisfied with but little, he was, though poor, able to help others. His parish was a large one, the houses being far apart, but bad weather never prevented him visiting his afflicted people, high and low, up to the very boundaries of his cure, and he used to walk all the way. He *did* first and preached afterwards, so that he gave his sheep a 'noble ensample.' If gold itself rust, what can we expect of iron? If a priest lead a foul life, what can be looked for from secular people? He did not set his benefice for hire, or leave his flock to itself while he went to London to seek preferment. Nor,

though so virtuous, was he untender and repelling to sinners.

There are good priests now, and let us hope that bad ones are (not, as in Chaucer's time) the exception, and not the rule; and we have also country-gentlemen, or rather what we now call gentlemen-farmers, as hospitable and wholesome as Chaucer's Franklin, whose face is ruddy from the country air, and beard white as a daisy; and who, if not believing in St Julian, the patron saint of hospitality, still keep open house—a house wherein it snows meat and drink. Let us now leave the male characters of the jovial procession and suite, and glance at the female ones.

SUBMARINE TREASURE VENTURES.

ENGLAND, Holland, France, and Spain were much addicted to declaring war in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and whenever this was the case, the enemies of Spain looked out sharply for the treasure-ships returning to Europe from the gold and silver mining regions of the Indies—the Spanish galleons. These galleons were very large ships, with three or four decks. Spain used to send them at fixed periods to the coasts of Mexico and Peru, to receive on board the gold and silver bullion extracted from the mines, and bring it to Spain. Commodore Anson, as is well known, was one of the lucky naval commanders who fell in with and captured one of these auriferous galleons. But the most notable instance was that at Vigo Bay, a few months before Queen Anne ascended the English throne. At that time, England and Holland were at war with Spain and France, in a struggle called the War of the Succession, relating as it did to the right of succession to the Spanish throne. Of course, being a war by land as well as by sea, all was fish that came into the net; and as it so happened that a fleet of Spanish war-ships was at that very time conveying a fleet of Spanish treasure-ships across the Atlantic, it was natural that the English and Dutch should look out for something in that way. Vigo was the place—a bay near the extreme northern end of the Atlantic seaboard of the peninsula, and separated from Cadiz by the whole length of Portugal.

What says Macaulay concerning this transaction? 'The fleet was off the coast of Portugal, on the way back to England, when the Duke of Ormond received intelligence that the treasure-ships from America had just arrived in Europe, and had, in order to avoid his armament, repaired to the harbour of Vigo. The cargo consisted, it was said, of more than three millions sterling in gold and silver, besides much valuable merchandise. The prospect of plunder reconciled all disputes; Dutch and English, admirals and generals, were equally eager for action. The Spaniards might, with the greatest ease, have secured the treasure by simply landing it; but it was a fundamental law of Spanish trade that the galleons should unload at Cadiz, and at Cadiz only. The Chamber of Commerce at Cadiz, in the true spirit of monopoly, refused even at this conjuncture to bate one jot of its privilege. The matter was referred to the Council of the Indies. That body deliberated and hesitated just a day too long. Some feeble preparations for defence were made. Two ruined towers at the mouth of the Bay of

Vigo were garrisoned by a few ill-armed and untrained rustics; a boom was thrown across the entrance of the basin; and a few French ships of war, which had convoyed the galleons from America, were moored within. But all was to no purpose. The English ships broke the boom. Ormond and his soldiers scaled the forts; the French burned their ships, and escaped to the shore. The conquerors shared some millions of dollars; some millions more were sunk. When all the galleons had been captured or destroyed, came an order in due form allowing them to unload.' Admiral Rooke was with the Duke of Ormond, the one having a fleet of fifty sail, and the other a land-force of thirteen thousand men. Accounts are very conflicting concerning the ratio of treasure secured by the Spaniards, brought away by the English, and sunk. One writer states that the English brought away several men-of-war, and six galleons containing treasure to the amount of seven million pieces of eight; while the Spaniards sank eleven or twelve galleons laden to the value of six millions in gold and silver. Another, that the treasure sunk was more in value than that which was saved by the Spaniards, plus that which was brought away by the English. Another, that the total treasure was twenty million pieces of eight, of which no less than fourteen millions was captured by the English. Therefore, Macaulay's 'some millions of dollars' brought away must satisfy our curiosity as best it can. The English spoil was in great part embezzled by nefarious agents, but some reached England, and was coined, as a memento of the achievement.

What the pieces of money really were, is a matter that seems to be left in some confusion. Some speak of them as gold, some as silver, some as gold and silver; while others would treat the treasure as bullion in gold and silver, worth so many millions sterling. The designation 'pieces of eight' has had different meanings at different times—a gold doubloon of eight double crowns, and a silver crown of eight *ochavos*. Nay, it has sometimes meant a *value*, and sometimes a *weight* of silver; for the silver piece of eight had the weight which was at one time called eight royals. All things considered, we may perhaps better take the more modest estimate—that a treasure worth so many pieces of eight was about equal to so many of our crown pieces, or an ounce of silver each.

Now, there is a project on foot to send out an expedition, with the avowed purpose of recovering the sunken treasure, if possible. A *concessionnaire* has had this matter in view for ten years past. He obtained from the Spanish government a concession (as it is called on the continent) or permission to do this; the agreement being, that whatever is raised from the sea-bottom of Vigo Bay, be it little or much, is to be shared in the ratio of three-fourths to him, and one-fourth to the Spanish crown, he to bear all the costs and trouble of the enterprise.

When Colonel Gowen, in the early part of the present year, examined the actual condition of the sunken ships, he found the following results: 1. The *Almirante*, in seven and a half fathoms water, has her timbers projecting two or three feet above the mud and shells at the bottom of the sea, all else being couched in a slimy bed; there are no indications that she has been burned, and the

timbers below the mud have escaped from the attacks of the *teredo*. Although called a man-of-war, she more resembles a galleon. 2. The *Espicio* is in eight fathoms water, with her timbers nearly whole, but much perforated by the *teredo*. 3. The *Tambor* is more sound and perfect than the two above named, the deck being eighteen inches under the mud and shells. Colonel Gowen detected a layer of brickwork on a part of the deck; this he supposes to have been the floor of a cook-house. The deck is made of planks six inches wide by five in thickness. 4. The *Cruzeta* is in eight and a half fathoms water, sounder and less encumbered with mud than any of the three above named; on the ship lie an anchor, a mortar, and a gun-wheel. 5. The *Chaternan* has been burned to some extent, but her timbers appear to be quite sound. 6. The *Higuera*, lying in five and a half fathoms water, has been much burned, but her timbers are generally sound: several cannon-balls are on the deck. 7 and 8. The two remaining vessels, whose names are not given, have been much burned, and are immersed eight or ten feet in the soft mud.

The original names of the ships are not mentioned; those here given have been adopted by the divers who from time to time have examined them. All the sunken vessels form so many separate and complete mounds, above the general level of the bed of the bay, so great has been the accumulation of shells and mud above and around them. The galleon said to be the richest of the whole fleet, while being towed out of the bay by the English ship *Monmouth*, struck on a sunken rock in the South Channel, and went down. All hands were saved except two, but the treasure went to the bottom, and—like the old woman in the vinegar bottle—'if not gone, lives there still.'

The concessionaire has formed, or is endeavouring to form, a Company, with a joint-stock purse sufficient to defray the costs of the venture. Regarded as a speculative investment, as a source of profit, we have nothing to do with the matter here; but as a proposal for rendering useful that which is now useless (supposing there is really any treasure there after all), there are certainly points of interest about it. Colonel Gowen, for reasons presently to be stated, has been engaged to practically conduct the operations.

As to the means of raising the treasure, the armour-encased diver is looked forward to as the man of the future. Colonel Gowen says that he can only learn of one attempt having been made to raise the treasure, about twenty years ago. It was made upon two of the vessels only, by the aid of the diving-bell. This, as is now pretty well ascertained, is not an effective practical mode of procedure, seeing that the divers can make only a superficial examination, not beyond the lateral extent of the iron walls of the bell itself, and cannot possibly descend into the holds of sunken ships, or into any irregular cavities. The diving-dress—which leaves the arms and legs of the wearer free, while protecting his head from all access to water, and providing fresh air for respiration, and an exit for expired air—allows him to walk and scramble about into all sorts of holes and corners, always provided he does not break or entangle the ropes and pipes which connect him with the world above.

The exact plan which Colonel Gowen determines to follow will probably depend on the

special circumstances of each ship. It is now known from practical experience that vessels can be, and have been, raised bodily from the bottom of the sea; while it is equally well known that divers can extricate and bring up valuable property from sunken ships. Floating pontoons have been used in a variety of ways for the first mentioned of these purposes. A remarkable instance of this kind took place last year. The *Wolf*, an iron-built mail-steamer, was sunk by a collision in Belfast Lough, and lay submerged in forty feet depth of water. After considering many plans of proceeding, Messrs Harland and Wolff undertook to raise the vessel. They constructed an immense floating raft of iron air-tanks, thoroughly water-tight. There were four of these tanks, arranged in two pairs, with a lateral distance between the pairs more than equal to the extreme width of the sunken vessel. Stout cross logs of timber in various parts connected the whole of the tanks into one float or raft, having a buoyant power of eight hundred and fifty tons—more than equal to the weight of the submerged ship. The vessel being embedded in eight feet of mud, there was no facility for passing chains under and around the hull, as has been done in other cases of ship-raising. Instead of this, chains were hooked into the side-light holes in the hull; there were fifty of these holes, fifty chains hooked into them, and fifty capstans or lifting-screws on the platforms of the float, to lay hold of the upper ends of the chains; each chain being capable of lifting twenty-five tons. Divers were employed to examine the exact position of the ship, and to secure the hooks into the side-light holes. These elaborate preparations being ready, the process of raising began. Two hundred and fifty men were set to work at the capstans or screws; they worked with a will; and in six hours the half-drowned *Wolf* fairly made an appearance above the surface of the water, and was towed triumphantly into Belfast harbour.

Whether Colonel Gowen proposes to adopt some such plan as this at Vigo, is not yet stated. Perhaps he holds himself open to vary his plan according to the circumstances which each vessel may present on examination; and perhaps he may try to bring up the treasure without raising the ships themselves. Certain it is that he has raised sunken ships; and it is on this account that his services have been secured for the Vigo enterprise. Those who are conversant with the details of the Crimean War will remember that on the 23d of September 1854, three days after the battle of the Alma, and three days before the arrival of the British army on the heights above Balaklava, Prince Menchikoff adopted the bold expedient of forming a line of Russian ships-of-war across the entrance to Sebastopol harbour, and sinking them by scuttling. It was apparently a reckless and unprecedented bit of strategy, but it fully answered the intended purpose; for the magnificent English and French fleets were unable throughout the war to make the smallest entry into the harbour, or to approach near enough for any effective bombardment of the fortifications. Again, on the 8th of September 1855, when the Russians abandoned Sebastopol, and retreated to the northern forts, they sank all the remaining ships in the harbour, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the besiegers. Thus it arose that the fine harbour of Sebastopol

was choked up with sunken ships. Well, it is in this quarter that Colonel Gowen has already displayed his ship-raising ingenuity. He says: 'When raising the sunken fleet at Sebastopol for the imperial Russian government, I laboured under a number of difficulties which can scarcely be over-rated; and yet the most perfect success attended my operations, as I then raised and cleared seventy vessels of all sizes, some of which are now in commission.' Comparing Vigo with Sebastopol, he adds: 'My soundings in the Bay of Vigo shewed a bottom of mud in which the galleons are not more than half buried. When I compare this with the twenty feet of mud, clay, oyster-shells, and gravel in which the sunken fleet at Sebastopol was lying, I look forward with the most sanguine expectations to the result of the proposed undertaking. Instead of an open roadstead, as at Sebastopol, the small bay in which the galleons are lying is completely landlocked, so that operations can be carried on in all weathers, and through any season of the year.'

We shall see, therefore, whether Neptune can be made to yield up the treasure which, according to repute, he has for a hundred and sixty-seven years retained in his dominions at the bottom of the sea.

Another submarine Venture also invites our attention at present; but the lost treasure is of much smaller amount, and the episode has something like a century less of time to give romance to it. The facts are briefly as follow. In 1799, when Holland was waging war against France, and England aided the Dutch government with subsidies of men and money, a large amount of treasure was sent over in Her Majesty's ship *Lutine*. The government bullion or cash alone is said to have been a million and a half sterling in value; in addition, there were the crown-jewels of the Prince of Orange, which had just been repaired by Messrs Rundell and Bridge; while bullion sent over by private firms, and a large cargo of merchandise, raised the total value of the ship and its contents to a vast sum. Indeed, some accounts gave this total at three millions sterling. The *Lutine* was bound to the Zuyder Zee; but a storm raged so furiously on the coast of Holland, that she was driven on a sandbank between the islands of Vieland and Terschelling, and there wrecked. The circumstances were so unfavourable to anything in the way of rescue, that almost all the crew of two hundred persons were drowned. There was the treasure, then; and what became of it? During the first two years after the wreck, no attempt at salvage seems to have been made; but, at a later date, an English Company was formed, to endeavour to recover the sunken treasure, under an agreement that the Dutch government should receive one-half the proceeds. In the course of a few years, a sum of one hundred and sixty thousand pounds was raised, by such modes as were then known of employing the diving-bell, and divided equally between the Company and the government—that is, the Dutch government, for it does not appear that the English government put in a claim to it. The English underwriters or marine insurance firms lost heavily by the wreck; but the Dutch government for many years refused to recognise their claim to any of the salvage. More recently, however, Lloyd's, as the representative of the English underwriters generally, obtained twenty thousand pounds out of some of

the treasure fished up; this sum has been invested at compound interest, and is to serve as the basis for a new adventure. Another attempt is to be made, under the management of the committee of Lloyd's, and probably under agreement also with the Dutch government, to raise some or all of the buried treasure. We believe the attempt is to be made next summer, and probably with the effective diving-dress, instead of the diving-bell. The public are not invited to subscribe to this new adventure; so we have simply to take up the position of lookers-on, and wish success to the operators on the drowned *Lutine*.

CHAMPAGNE.

FASTER, faster, friend of mine!
Pour it not like vulgar wine;
'Tis a monarch—treat it so.
Let it frothing, foaming, flow
To the brim, o'er the brim—
Let the king his glories shew!

See it swell, and hiss, and froth
Like a maelstrom mad with wroth,
Roaring, raging, everywhere!
See uprise those tiny bubbles.
So our troubles, all our troubles,
Thus shall melt away in air.

Like a lion in its den
Startled by the tread of men,
Forth it foaming, flashing flies;
And each bubble, ere it dies,
Sparkles, sparkles, sparkles, sparkles,
Sparkles like a woman's eyes.

Ah! 'tis still! Its rage is spent
From mere want of aliment;
And its breath of life seems fled:
Fling the hungry wretch some bread.
Bread from thee! take bread from thee!
Sooner were the monarch dead.

Up he springs, and swells his tides
As to burst the glass' sides.
Bread to him who wears a crown!
Bread, the food of every clown!
Now, my friend, the bottle end;
Quaff the foaming monarch down.

The Publishers of CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL beg to direct the attention of CONTRIBUTORS to the following notice:
1st. All communications should be addressed to the 'Editor, 47 Paternoster Row, London.'

2d. To insure the return of papers that may prove ineligible, postage-stamps should in every case accompany them.

3d. All MSS. should bear the author's full CHRISTIAN name, surname, and address, legibly written.

4th. MSS. should be written on one side of the leaf only. Unless Contributors comply with the above rules, the Editor cannot undertake to return rejected papers.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by all Booksellers.